

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE **B-13**WASHINGTON POST
16 September 1985**JACK ANDERSON and DALE VAN ATTA**

Soviets Sprinkled 'Spy Dust' for Years

Apparently the KGB has been sprinkling "spy dust" on diplomats, dissidents and other suspicious characters for years. As far back as 1959, an infernal chemical was reportedly used to track one of the CIA's most valuable "moles" inside Soviet intelligence.

The story of how he was caught was brought to the Central Intelligence Agency by a KGB defector in 1964. Yet Stansfield Turner, director of the CIA from 1977 to 1981, said he'd never heard of "spy dust."

Neither had Malcolm Toon, who was U.S. ambassador in Moscow from 1976 until 1979.

While they were kept in the dark, the chemical dust was used to trace the movements of U.S. diplomats around Moscow.

It has been detected several times since 1976, but its use against U.S. diplomats has increased greatly since May.

The worry is that the stuff can be harmful to the diplomats' health. It has been identified as nitro phenyl pentadiene aldehyde—or NPPD—which can cause cancer.

The diplomats pick up the surveillance chemical on their skin from, say, a car steering wheel. Then they leave an invisible trail on every doorknob they touch or hand they shake. The KGB simply administers another chemical to a suspicious hand or doorknob, and the telltale NPPD becomes fluorescent.

This is how a U.S. mole, known as Col. Popov, reportedly was detected.

The story, which was both a triumph and a tragedy for the CIA, is locked in the agency's "top secret" files. But here are the essential details:

Popov was an officer of the GRU, Soviet military intelligence. He made contact with the CIA while he was stationed in Vienna in 1953.

Later he was transferred to East Berlin, where he continued to pass secrets to the CIA.

After he was called back to Moscow, Popov continued to provide important intelligence to the CIA through Russell Langelles, an intelligence officer working under diplomatic cover.

On Oct. 16, 1959, while exchanging a note on a Moscow bus, Popov and Langelles were arrested by the KGB.

Langelles was interrogated and kicked out of the country. Popov was executed.

Not until 1964, when KGB Maj. Yuri Nosenko defected in Geneva, did the CIA learn how the KGB monitored Popov's movements.

Among the wealth of information Nosenko gave his debriefers was the disclosure that Popov had been caught through the use of a chemical.

Nosenko didn't know the exact chemical agent used, but he reported that Langelles's Russian maid had dusted the diplomat's shoes with it.

The KGB, using a sniffer dog, tracked Langelles to a mailbox where the police found a note he had mailed to Popov.

Footnote: We interviewed the CIA case officer, George Kisvalter, who handled Popov in Berlin. Now 75 years old, Kisvalter said he couldn't comment because he is still employed by the CIA.